



Subject: RE: [Patrin] 138/01/n Prague/London - airport case - application launched at E

Date: Mon, 29 Oct 2001 11:04:55 +0100

From: Claude Cahn <ccahn@errc.org>

Reply-To: patrin-roma-culture@igc.topica.com

To: Markus Pape <markus.pape@ecn.cz>,
[Patrin <patrin-roma-culture@igc.topica.com>](mailto:Patrin@patrin-roma-culture@igc.topica.com)

References: 1

- > Liberty takes Home Secretary to court over treatment of Romas
- > UK Immigration actions at Prague Airport:
- > "discriminating, humiliating and unlawful"
- > Wednesday 24th October 2001
- > >
- > Liberty has this afternoon served papers on the Home Secretary,
- > as we launch our application for judicial review on behalf of the
- > European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and six anonymous Czech
- > Roma people.
- > >
- > The Roma people were subjected to discriminatory, humiliating and
- > unlawful treatment by UK Immigration Service Officers at Prague
- > Airport in July of this year. The officers were there as part of a
- > special arrangement with the Czech Government allowing British
- > immigration officials to turn back passengers before they even
- > reached the plane to travel to Britain.
- > >
- > Liberty's in-house counsel Shami Chakrabarti, the lawyer for this
- > case, says:
- > "People at Prague airport were being kept off the plane purely by
- > reference to the colour of their skin. It's a mechanism to turn
- > people away automatically, without having even to listen to the
- > story of people who are highly likely to have a valid claim for
- > asylum.
- > >
- > "We believe this is a racist practice, which doesn't reflect the
- > Government's justifications for the Immigration exemptions from the
- > Race Relations Amendment Act".
- > >
- > The people automatically turned away are not from groups who are
- > unlikely to be fleeing persecution - rather, they are among those
- > more likely to have a legitimate reason to request asylum. That's

> because an authorisation signed by Home Office Minister Barbara
> Roche specifies seven ethnic or national groups whom immigration
> officers are empowered to refuse entry to the UK outright on the
> basis of their race or nationality.
> These include:
>>
> * Afghans - although Britain is now at war with the Taliban regime
> and has denounced its extensive abuses committed against
> Afghan people;
> * Kurds (despite Iraq), Tamils (despite the ongoing civil war in Sri
> Lanka), Somalis (despite over a decade of complete lawlessness
> and state breakdown - the Foreign office lists it as one of just eight
> countries in the world to which it advises against all travel);
> *
> * ... and Roma. In a letter to the Guardian this summer, the
> highly-respected Medical Foundation for Care of the Victims of
> Torture stated that it had treated 59 Czech Roma in the last five
> years alone at its centre for survivors of torture and violence. The
> Foundation noted
> "numerous testimonies of official complicity, that at best describe
> indifference by the authorities to these attacks and at worst
> highlight their participation in anti-Roma violence, including the rape
> of Roma women. This evidence seems to count for little with the
> Home Office".

>>
>>
>>

> BACKGROUND

> Our six clients in this case all went to Prague Airport to catch
> flights to London in the course of July.

>>

> * All had valid airline tickets.

> * All are Czech nationals - and so don't need a visa for travel to
> the UK

> * Yet all were singled out for extended questioning apparently by
> reference to the colour of their skin. They were prevented from
> travelling to the UK. The procedure was conducted in full view of
> attendant media and other passengers.

> * Some but not all were seeking asylum; one elderly woman was
> seeking a short visit with her grand-daughter in the UK.

>>

- > The Immigration Service may have been relying on a "ministerial
- > authorisation" signed in April 2001 by Home Office minister
- > Barbara Roche under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2001.
- > This document appears to allow people to be refused entry to the
- > UK by reason of their race.
- > >
- > The above-mentioned practice is contrary to general principles of
- > English law and to the Human Rights Act.
- > >
- > We shall be seeking an end to this degrading practice at Prague
- > Airport and the withdrawal of the ministerial authorisation.
- > >
- > Issued by Roger Bingham - press officer, Liberty; telephone 020
- > 7378 3656
- > www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk
- > >
- >

The Patrin Web Journal - www.Patrin.com
A RomNews Network Partner - www.RomNews.com

EASY UNSUBSCRIBE click here: http://igc.topica.com/u/?aVxiqc_a2lcvlH
Or send an email To: patrin-roma-culture-unsubscribe@igc.topica.com
This email was sent to: ustiben.2@ntlworld.com

T O P I C A -- Register now to manage your mail!
<http://www.topica.com/partner/tag02/register>

Claude Cahn <ccahn@errc.org>

Research and Publications Director
European Roma Rights Center

[View Complete Card](#)

[Add to Address Book](#)